

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 JERUSALEM 2049

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

U.S. DEL. NO. 19

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L., JR.)
SUBJECT: ATHERTON MEETING WITH BEGIN - JULY 27

REF: AMMAN 6189 (U.S. DEL. NO. 13)

SUMMARY: MY MEETING WITH BEGIN ON JULY 27 WAS A SERIOUS, THOROUGH
REVIEW OF CURRENT STATUS OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IN ADDITION,
ISRAELIS AGREED TO REFLECT ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS I
POSED AND TO GIVE
US THEIR VIEWS BEFORE OR DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT. I DESCRIBED THE
CONTINUING GAP BETWEEN THE PARTIES ON THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE
OF WHAT CAN BE AGREED NOW ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE FIVE-
YEAR PERIOD, AND I SUGGESTED A WAY OF DESCRIBING WHERE THE MIDDLE
GROUND ON THIS MIGHT LIE. I DREW DIRECTLY FROM THE TALKING POINTS
I SUBMITTED PER REFTEL TO (A) SKETCH OUT AREAS OF COMMONALITY
IN THE TWO SIDES' POSITIONS; (B) DISCUSS THE "END OF OCCUPATION"
CONCEPT; AND (C) REVIEW THE EGYPTIAN THREE-STAGE APPROACH TO
NEGOTIATIONS. I WAS ABLE TO FORESHADOW SOME OF OUR OWN IDEAS IN
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A NATURAL MANNER BY INTERSPERSING THEM AMONG A SERIES OF QUESTIONS
DESIGNED TO STIMULATE FURTHER ISRAELI THINKING ON THE FIVE-
YEAR PERIOD. FOR HIS PART, BEGIN ARGUED THAT UNDER INTERNATIONAL
LAW ISRAEL IS NOT IN "OCCUPATION" OF WEST BANK/GAZA TERRITORY
AND THEREFORE OBJECTED TO THE "END OF OCUPATION" CONCEPT.
LEWIS AND I TRIED WITH NO APPARENT SUCCESS TO GET HIM TO SEE
POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTATES OF THIS APPROACH.

BEGIN ALSO DECLARED THAT THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL, EVEN WITH THE THREE-STATE PROCEDURAL ELABORATION, IS LESS PRECISE THAN THE ISRAELI PLAN IN DEPICTING A TIME SEQUENCE FOR EVENTS. BEGIN ALSO EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN OVER WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A TRIPARTITE MEETING IN THE SINAI NEXT MONTH, AND REPEATED THE PITCH HE HAD MADE EARLIER TO LEWIS FOR THE CONCLUSION OF A "PARTIAL AGREEMENT" WITH EGYPT UNLIMITED IN TIME, IF EFFORTS TO AGREE ON BASIS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT BOG DOWN. HE ASKED THAT I EXPLORE THIS CONCEPT WITH SADAT. HE SEEMED DISTRESSED THAT SADAT TOOK AS AN INSULT HIS LETTER REJECTING A UNILATERAL GESTURE, AND ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS GOOD INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD TO SADAT WHEN I AM IN EGYPT. BEGIN TOOK ISSUE WITH OUR CONCEPT THAT THE AUTHORITY OF A NEW REGIME FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA SHOULD DERIVE FROM AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES, STATING THAT IT SHOULD INSTEAD DERIVE FROM THE MILITARY GOVERNOR IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE INSTITUTED "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." HE SAID THAT IN THE ISRAELI VIEW THE MILITARY GOVERNOR WOULD REMAIN IN PLACE, BUT WOULD "DISAPPEAR AS AN ACTIVE OFFICIAL." DAYAN WAS CONCERNED WITH THE TWO QUESTIONS: (A) WOULD SADAT NEGOTIATE A SINAI AND A WEST BANK AGREEMENT IF HUSSEIN REFUSED TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS? AND (B) IF WE REFER TO THE END OF OCCUPATION, WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT ON LAND ACQUISITION BY ISRAELIS ON THE WEST BANK AND ON THEIR SETTLEMENTS THERE? I DID NOT GO INTO QUESTION OF HOW TO RECONCILE ISRAELIS NOT BEING "FOREIGNERS" IN WEST BANK BUT WILL DO SO AT LUNCH MEETING WITH DAYAN FRIDAY. FINALLY, BEGIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES PROFESSED SECRET

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CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHAT KAMEL SAID AT LEEDS ABOUT ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE AFTER FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, AND WHAT THEY HAD HEARD FROM SADAT AND US IN THIS RESPECT. END SUMMARY.

1. I HAD WHAT I FELT WAS A VERY GOOD 90-MINUTE MEETING WITH BEGIN LATE AFTERNOON OF JULY 27. BEGIN WAS FLANKED BY YADIN, DAYAN, WEIZMAN, EVRON, DINITZ, ROSENNE AND RUBENSTEIN. WITH ME WERE LEWIS, STERNEER, KIRBY, SHERMAN AND BLACKWILL.

2. I BEGAN BY REVIEWING OUR PERCEPTION OF THE LEEDS CASTLE TALKS, EMPHASIZING THEIR USEFULNESS IN TERMS OF THE DEPTH IN WHICH EACH SIDE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE IDEAS OF THE OTHER. I MADE A POINT OF CONGRATULATING DAYAN ON THE CLEAR AND PRECISE DESCRIPTION HE GAVE IN THE KNESSET JULY 24 OF THE POSITIONS ADOPTED BY THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION AT LEEDS.

3. AT THIS POINT, BEGIN BROKE IN TO UNDERSCORE THE FACT THAT ON THE MATTER OF ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS WEST BANK SOVEREIGNTY AFTER FIVE YEARS, DAYAN HAD SPOKEN TO THE SECRETARY AT LEEDS ON HIS OWN BEHALF. THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL CANNOT SPEAK ON A PERSONAL BASIS, BEGIN ADDED, SO THE GOVERNMENT GAVE

ITS APPROVAL TO DAYAN'S THREE POINTS AND THEY NOW CONSTITUTE THE ISRAELI POSITION. THE QUESTION NOW, SAID BEGIN, IS WHETHER THERE WILL BE A TRIPARTITE MEETING NEXT MONTH; ISRAELI IS PREPARED TO GO.

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4. BEGIN THEN TURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF UNILATERAL GESTURES. HE DESCRIBED HOW WEIZMAN HAD BROUGHT TO HIM FROM SALZBURG A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SADAT SUGGESTING THAT ISRAEL MAKE A UNILATERAL GESTURE, WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE THE RETURN TO EGYPTIAN CONTROL OF EL ARISH AND MT. SINAI. AFTER THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED AND REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL, BEGIN SAID HE WROTE A "KIND LETTER" TO SADAT POINTING OUT THAT ISRAEL WAS UNABLE TO AGREE TO A UNILATERAL STEP BUT WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET TO NEGOTIATE MUTUAL GESTURES. LATER ON IN THE MEETING BEGIN WAS AT GREAT PAINS TO EXPLAIN THAT HE DID NOT INTEND FOR HIS LETTER TO INSULT SADAT. HE DESCRIBED IT AS A SERIOUS LETTER DESIGNED SOLELY TO EXPLAIN THE ISRAELI POSITION ON SADAT'S SUGGESTION. HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY THIS FACT TO SADAT IN CAIRO, AND REITERATED THE REQUEST IN A PRIVATE ASIDE FOLLOWING THE MEETING.

5. BEGIN CONTINUED BY STRESSING THAT ISRAEL STILL DESIRES A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT EMBODIED IN PEACE TREATIES. IF, HOWEVER, THIS PROVES TO BE TOO DIFFICULT, HE SAID, WE MAY HAVE TO MOVE "IN STEPS", CONCLUDING PARTIAL AGREEMENTS UNLIMITED IN TIME. BEGIN EXPLAINED THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE IN MIND ANOTHER SINAI II, IN WHICH THE U.S. MADE RECOMPENSE TO ISRAEL BUT IN WHICH THERE WAS NO RECIPROCITY FROM EGYPT. IF SADAT WANTS EL ARISH, BEGIN SAID, WE WILL CONSIDER IT, BUT THERE MUST
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BE A QUID PRO QUO OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI.

6. BEGIN ASKED ME TO EXPLAIN THE ISRAELI REJECTION OF A UNILATERAL GESTURE TO SADAT IN THIS FASHION, EMPHASIZING THAT THE TYPE OF PARTIAL AGREEMENT THAT HE HAD DESCRIBED IS A CONCEPT WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DISCARDED EVEN WHILE RETAINING THE HOPE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT. " IF WE HAVE THE CHANCE FOR SOMETHING LESS, WE SHOULD GRASP IT." HE THEN RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER EGYPT WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND TRILATERAL TALKS NEXT MONTH.

7. I REPLIED THAT SADAT HAD AS YET TAKEN NO FIRM DECISION TO AGREE TO THE MEETING. HIS LATEST WORD LEFT THE SUBJECT OPEN, AND THIS IS SOMETHING I WILL BE PURSUING IN CAIRO. MEANWHILE, I SAID, THE U.S. IS PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THESE MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE.

8. I RETURNED TO THE RESULTS OF THE LEEDS TALKS BY SAYING THAT WE HAD DISCOVERED QUITE A LOT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNING THE 5-YEAR INTERIM PERIOD, BUT THAT FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE MORE DIFFICULT QUESTION OF WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FIVE YEARS. I DESCRIBED THE NUB OF THE ISSUE AS BEING EGYPT'S DESIRE FOR AGREEMENT NOW THAT THE FINAL STATUS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WILL BE SETTLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242, WHEREAS ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO DEFER ANY DECISION ON THIS FOR A LEAST FIVE YEARS WHILE INSTITUTING A REGIME OF SELF-RULE FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THE AREA. IN OTHER WORDS, EGYPT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS WRAPPED UP NOW WHEREAS ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO KEEP ITS OPTIONS FULLY OPEN. BEGIN INDICATED AGREEMENT WITH THIS

9. I DESCRIBED THE GAP BETWEEN THESE POSITIONS AS WIDE AND SAID IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO GO

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BEYOND A CERTAIN POINT IN NEGOTIATING QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD UNTIL THERE IS SOME MEETING OF THE MINDS ON THIS CORE ISSUE. I WONDERED IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO FIND A MIDDLE GROUND ON THIS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE IN THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITION: THE EGYPTIANS WOULD NEED TO SETTLE FOR A FORMULA THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE ALL THE FINAL ANSWERS IN ADVANCE, WHILE ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TO BE WILLING TO SAY THAT AT A CERTAIN POINT IT WILL NEGOTIATE THE FINAL ANSWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 242, THE OBJECTIVE BEING A PEACE TREATY THAT WOULD ENCOMPASS ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THAT RESOLUTION. I ADDED THAT ISRAEL'S LATEST POSITION AS READ BY DAYAN IN THE KNESSET ON

MONDAY SEEMED TO OPEN UP POSSIBILITIES IN THE REGARD.

10. I DESCRIBED AS A RELATED ISSUE HOW TO PROVIDE FOR SOME
EXPRESSION OF THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED TO THE FINAL
SETTLEMENT WITHOUT OPENING UP ALL THE RISKS THAT ISRAEL
SEES IN SELF- DETERMINATION.

11. I THEN DESCRIBED THE AREAS OF COMMONALITY IN THE
APPROACHES OF THE TWO PARTIES TO THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD AS SET
FORTH IN REFTEL. I ALSO DESCRIBED CERTAIN AREAS OF FURTHER
COMMONALITY WHICH EMERGED AT LEEDS, ALSO AS LISTED IN REFTEL.
WHEN I REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM
OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, BEGIN REMINDED ME THAT ISRAEL
HAS ALWAYS SPOKEN OF JEWISH REFUGEES AS WELL.

12. I THEN TURNED TO AN EXPLORATION OF ISRAELI THINKING
REGARDING PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS ON THE GROUND DURING THE
FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. (AFTER RECEIVING STATE 18489, I HAD
DECIDED THAT THIS WOULD BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE WAY TO WEAVE
SOME OF OUR OWN IDEAS NATURALLY INTO MY PRESENTATION.) I SAID
THAT YOU HAD ASKED ME TO RAISE CERTAIN QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO MAKE
CERTAIN THAT WE UNDERSTOOD ISRAELI THINKING ON ISSUES REGARDING THE
FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. I MADE IT CLEAR THAT I WAS NOT SEEKING OFF-THE-
CUFF REPLIES, BUT HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS ISRAELI
RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS AT A LATER TIME. I ALSO STRESSED THAT
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THIS WAS NOT ANOTHER U.S. "QUESTIONNAIRE," BUT RATHER AN ATTEMPT TO
CLARIFY CERTAIN POINTS IN OUR OWN MINDS.

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

13. CONCERNING THE ENDING OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, I ASKED IF THE ABOLITION OF "THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT," AS CITED IN THE ISRAELI PLAN, IS DIFFERENT THAN WOULD BE THE ABOLITION OF "THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT," I ASKED MORE SPECIFICALLY IF THE MILITARY GOVERNOR WOULD REMAIN IN PLACE ACCORDING TO THE ISRAELI CONCEPT AND, IF SO, WHAT HIS FUNCTION WOULD BE IN RELATION TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL. I SAID THAT THIS SEEMS TO US AN IMPORTANT QUESTION IN VIEW OF THE NEED FOR ANY AGREEMENT TO GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION BOTH TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT BY THE INHABITANTS OF THE TERRITORIES AND TO THE CONTINUING SECURITY OF ISRAEL. I ADDED THAT THIS QUESTION ALSO EFFECTS THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY FOR ANY NEW REGIME WHICH, AS WE SUGGESTED AS LONG AGO AS LAST DECEMBER AND MOST RECENTLY AT LEEDS, MIGHT BEST DERIVE FROM THE AGREEMENT ITSELF.

14. I NEXT ASKED FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE ISRAELI CONCEPT OF THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED AND INSTALLED. I ALSO ASKED HOW THE CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION WOULD BE NOMINATED, AND WHO WOULD OVERSEE THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION AND VERIFY THE RESULTS. I POINTED OUT THAT WE HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN THE EGYPTIAN CONCEPT OF A SUPERVISORY ROLE FOR EGYPT AND JORDAN IN CONNECTION WITH THE ELECTED
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COUNCIL, AND ASKED IF ISRAEL SAW ANY WAY IN WHICH THIS CONCEPT MIGHT BE INCORPORATED INTO ITS PLAN.

15. TURNING TO SECURITY, I ASKED IF ISRAEL COULD ENVISAGE ANY CHANGE IN THE SIZE OF IDF FORCES IN THE TERRITORIES OR IN THEIR DEPLOYMENT PATTERN THAT MIGHT BE SEEN BY THE LOCAL INHABITANTS AS A REDUCTION IN THE ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE. I SAID THAT, IN OUR VIEW, DESIGNATING AREAS WHEREIN THE IDF MAY DEPLOY AND DESIGNATING THE SIZE OF THE FORCES INVOLVED MAY BE IMPORTANT IN GAINING BROAD ACCEPTANCE OF ANY AGREEMENT. I ALSO ASKED IF ISRAEL COULD SEE A POSSIBLE ROLE FOR EGYPT AND JORDAN IN THE SECURITY AREA.

16. I THEN RECALLED OUR AGREEMENT AT LEEDS THAT THE ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ORDER AS BETWEEN THE LOCAL POLICE AND ISRAELI FORCES COULD BECOME A COMPLEX ISSUE. I STATED MY ASSUMPTION THAT PUBLIC ORDER WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES EXCEPT IN CASES OF ACTS OR THREATS AGAINST THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL. I ASKED IF ISRAELI THINKING ON THIS PROBLEM HAD DEVELOPED ANY FURTHER

SINCE OUR DISCUSSIONS AT LEEDS.

17. FINALLY, REFERRING TO THE ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS REGARDING SOVEREIGNTY OF THE WEST BANK, I INQUIRED IF THERE WERE ANY REASONS WHY SUCH DISCUSSIONS COULD NOT AT LEAST BEGIN DURING THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD - AT LEAST DURING ITS LATTER PART - RATHER THAN WAIT UNTIL THE FIVE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED.

18. IN REPLY, BEGIN DESCRIBED THE POINTS I HAD MADE AS "VERY COGENT" AND SAID HE MIGHT APPOINT A CABINET COMMITTEE TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH THESE ISSUES. ON THE PARTICULAR POINT CONCERNING THE DERIVATION OF AUTHORITY FOR A NEW REGIME,
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BEGIN PROMISED TO CONSIDER OUR CONCEPT THAT SUCH AUTHORITY MIGHT BEST DERIVE FROM AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ISRAEL WANTED AUTONOMY TO BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER IT HEALTHY TO WAIT FOR THIS UNTIL AN AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED. IN ORDER FOR WHAT HE TERMED THE DEVOLUTION TO TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR AUTHORITY TO DERIVE FROM THE MILITARY GOVERNOR WHO IS ALREADY IN PLACE. BEGIN ADDED THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THE GOVERNOR WOULD REMAIN AS THE CONVEYOR OF AUTHORITY BUT THAT ISRAEL - AS IT HAS MAINTAINED FROM THE BEGINNING - HAS NO INTENTION OF REVOKING THE ABOLITION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. AS HE SEES IT, THE MILITARY GOVERNOR WOULD STILL BE IN OFFICE BUT WOULD "DISAPPEAR AS AN ACTIVE OFFICIAL."

19.

19. BEGIN OBVIOUSLY HAD SOME PROBLEMS AS WELL WITH MY POINT CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ORDER, DESCRIBING THIS SUGGESTION AS "A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH" FOR ISRAEL. WEIZMAN INTERJECTED TO POINT OUT THAT IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH SADAT ON MARCH 13, THE IDEA OF A JOINT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI POLICE FORCE CAME UP AND WAS NOT REJECTED.

20. I THEN PRESENTED OUR THINKING ABOUT THE "END OF OCCUPATION" CONCEPT AS SET FORTH IN THE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL. BEGIN EXPRESSED THE TRADITIONAL ISRAELI VIEW THAT ISRAEL IS NOT IN OCCUPATION OF WEST BANK/GAZA TERRITORIES IN THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED SENSE OF THE WORD. DAYAN SAID THAT WHEN SECRETARY VANCE CAME TO HIM WITH THIS IDEA (SIC), DAYAN HAD REACTED BY OBSERVING THAT IF OCCUPATION IS TO END, IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO AGREE THAT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WOULD NOT BE ILLEGAL AND THE ACQUISITION OF LAND BY ISRAELIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. DAYAN BUT THE QUESTION TO ME THAT IF THE OCCUPATION IS TO END, WHAT EFFECT WOULD THIS HAVE ON THE SUBJECT OF LAND PURCHASE

AND SETTLEMENT. I EXPRESSED MY PERSONAL OPINION THAT THESE
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ARE TWO SEPARATE QUESTIONS, EACH OF WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE
NEGOTIATED SEPARATELY.

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21. BEGIN AT THIS POINT OFFERED HIS EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN AN OCCUPATION REGIME AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF TERRITORIES.
HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT ACCEPT THE ASSERTION THAT
THERE HAS BEEN AN ISRAELI OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE TERRITORIES
AND THAT HE WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THIS DESCRIPTION
EX POST FACTO. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ISRAEL CANNOT ACCEPT THE
TERM "OCCUPATION" AND THAT HE PREFERS TO "SPEAK THE TRUTH,"
WHICH IS THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ITS ADMINISTRATION
WILL END. AMBASSADOR LEWIS OBSERVED THAT WHAT WE WERE REFERRING
TO IS NOT A LEGAL DISTINCTION, BUT RATHER A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
SYMBOLIC MATTER HAVING POSSIBLE POLITICAL WEIGHT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.
I ASKED BEGIN TO REFLECT ON OUR CONCEPT AS SOMETHING WHICH
MIGHT HELP OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF ARAB INSISTENCE ON RESOLV-
IN THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE AT THE OUTSET.

22. BEGIN NEXT RAISED THE FACT THAT KAMEL AT LEEDS HAD REJECTED
COMPLETELY THE IDEA OF ANY ISRAELI SOLDIER REMAINING ON THE
WEST BANK. AMBASSADOR LEWIS ADMITTED THAT KAMEL'S TREATMENT
OF THIS SUBJECT AT THAT TIME HAD BEEN CONFUSING. BUT HE

SUGGESTED THAT A LOOK AT THE EGYPTIAN SEQUENCE OF NEGOTIATING EVENTS SHOWS THAT IT ENVISAGES A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF ISRAELI FORCES ON THE WEST BANK, WITH ADMITTEDLY NONE REMAINING AFTER FIVE YEARS. BEGIN SAID THIS WAS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT WEIZMAN
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HAD HEARD FROM SADAT AND WHAT ISRAELIS HAD HEARD FROM US. I SAID THAT SADAT HAS PRIVATELY LEFT OPEN AT LEAST THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME ISRAELI FORCES REMAINING EVEN AFTER THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD.

23. DAYAN THEN ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT OF SADAT'S WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE OVER THE WEST BANK IF HUSSEIN REFUSED TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATIONS. DAYAN SAID THAT WHEN HE, AT ONE POINT AT LEEDS, ASKED YOU IF SADAT WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SO, YOU SAID THAT THAT WAS YOUR ASSUMPTION. DAYAN STRESSED THAT HE WAS RAISING THIS SUBJECT ONLY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHAT KAMEL HAD SAID AT LEEDS AND WHAT YOU HAD CONVEYED AS YOUR ASSUMPTIONS. ALSO, DAYAN OBSERVED, THE EGYPTIAN POSITION ON ISRAELI FORCES AS STATED BY KAMEL IS THAT NO FORCES WILL REMAIN AFTER FIVE YEARS. I SAID THAT OUR EXCHANGE BEARS OUT THE APPARENT FACT THAT POSITIONS WHICH KAMEL EXPRESSES WITH A SENSE OF FINALITY MAY NOT IN FACT BE FINAL EGYPTIAN POSITIONS.

24. I NEXT REVIEWED THE EGYPTIAN THREE-STAGE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS AS SET FORTH IN REFTEL. BEGIN OBJECTED TO THE EGYPTIAN SEQUENCE, DESCRIBING IT AS A REQUIREMENT TO AGREE "WITHIN ONE MONTH" TO SOMETHING DESIGNED TO BEGIN AT AN UNSPECIFIED TIME. HE CONTRASTED THIS WITH THE ISRAELI PLAN WHICH HE SAID SPELLS OUT EXACTLY WHEN SELF-RULE WOULD START AND THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD THUS BEGIN. BEGIN THEN MADE A SERIES OF ONLY VAGUELY RELATED POINTS (THE ELECTED ARAB COUNCIL CONSTITUTES A REVOLUTION; OVER A 60-MONTH PERIOD HUMAN RELATIONS WOULD EVOLVE AND IMPROVE; THE 1947 PARTITION PLAN SPOKE OF AN ECONOMIC UNION.) BEGIN SAID THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA FIVE YEARS AFTER THE INSTITUTION OF SELF-RULE. THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL, ON THE OTHER HAND, TURNS THIS UPSIDE DOWN AND SPECIFIES NO PRECISE DATES.

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25. I RESPONDED BY SUGGESTING THAT ONE MIGHT USEFULLY SEPARATE SUBSTANCE FROM PROCEDURE IN THE EGYPTIAN THINKING. I OBSERVED THAT A MAJOR ELEMENT IN THEIR CONCEPT WAS THAT THE INTERIM REGIME SHOULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN AN AGREEMENT TO WHICH JORDAN IS A PARTY.

26. DAYAN RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF SADAT'S WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN TREATIES ALONE IF JORDAN REFUSED TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE QUOTED EXTENSIVELY FROM THE HEBREW MINUTES OF THE US - ISRAELI BILATERAL MEETING OF JULY 17 AND (STRANGELY) ASKED IF, ON THE BASIS OF MY LATEST DISCUSSIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN, I STILL AGREED WITH YOUR ASSUMPTION THAT SADAT WOULD BE WILLING TO ACT ALONE. I POINTED OUT THAT YOUR COMMENTS WERE BASED ON OUR CONTACTS WITH SADAT UP TO THAT TIME AND THAT I COULD HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO THAT UNTIL I SPOKE TO SADAT IN EGYPT.

27. AMBASSADOR LEWIS VERY HELPFULLY REMINDED THE MEETING THAT WE WERE AT A VERY DELICATE MOMENT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT SADAT IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE OVER THE WEST BANK LIES AT THE HEART OF INTRA-ARAB POLITICS. LEWIS EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN SHOULD THIS ASPECT OF WHAT WAS SAID AT LEEDS INADVERTENTLY BECOME PUBLIC AND SAID HE HOPED VERY MUCH THAT THIS DISCUSSION OF WHAT SADAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT AGREE TO DO WOULD NOT LEAVE THE MEETING ROOM.

28. I CLOSED THE MEETING BY BRIEFING BEGIN ON MY TALKS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN. IN SO DOING, I SAID THAT PRINCE SAUD IS VERY SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SADAT'S INITIATIVE SUCCEEDING AND SEEMS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT RECONSTITUTING AN ARAB CONSENSUS. I MADE CLEAR THAT SAUD DOES NOT OBJECT TO THE IDEA OF DIRECT TALKS BY THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS HOWEVER, BUT ONLY TO DIRECT TALKS WHICH APPEAR TO BE LEADING NOWHERE.

29. I TOLD BEGIN THAT KING HUSSEIN HAD SHOWN NO REAL CHANGE
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IN JORDAN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTERING THE NEGOTIATIONS. I SAID THAT I HAD TOLD HIM FRANKLY THAT WE DID NOT THINK THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GET AT THIS TIME A FINAL SETTLEMENT ON THE WEST BANK/PALESTINIAN ISSUE, AND THAT I HAD ASKED HIM IF THERE MIGHT NOT BE SOME MID-POINT THAT HE COULD CONSIDER AS THE BASIS FOR JOINING. I TOLD BEGIN THAT THE KING HAD SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THIS.
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780711/aaaaaiuk.tel
Line Count: 539
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4777566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 AMMAN 6189
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1859019
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATHERTON MEETING WITH BEGIN - JULY 27
TAGS: OVIP, PBOR, MPOL, PDIP, US, IS, EG, (BEGIN, MENAHEM), (ATHERTON, ALFRED L JR)
To: STATE CAIRO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4777566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014